



RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

One Corliss Park

Providence, RI 02908

MEETING MINUTES – GENERAL MEETING

Date: April 5, 2011

Time: 6:00PM

Minutes recorded by: Nancy Sousa

Minutes approved on:

Interpreters: Carol Fay, Jon Henry and Maureen McEntee

Cart:

RIDE:

Call to Order

- a. Chairperson Travis Zellner called the meeting of the RI School for the Deaf Board of Trustees to order at 6:09 p.m. in the Cafeteria of the RI School for the Deaf.

Roll Call of Board of Trustees

- b. **In Attendance:** Mary Wambach, Marie Lynch, Amy D Roche, Iraida Williams (arrived at 6:40 p.m.), Jodi Merryman, Westley Resendes, Harvey Corson, Angelo Garcia.
- c. **Excused:**

Adjourn to Executive Session pursuant to RIGL 42-46-5 (a) (2) – Grievance

- d. **MOVED Mary Wambach AND SECONDED Marie Lynch:** That the Board would adjourn to Executive Session pursuant to RIGL 42-46-5 (a)(1) and (2) at 6:10 p.m.. Approved unanimously.
- e. **MOVED Westley Resendes AND SECONDED Mary Wambach:** That the Board would return to Open Session at 6:20 p.m.. Approved unanimously.
- f. **MOVED Angelo Garcia AND SECONDED Westley Resendes:** That the Board would seal the minutes of Executive Session. Approved unanimously.

Motions from Executive Session: None

Acceptance of Previous Meeting Minutes

Jan. 4, 2011- accepted as written by consensus

Feb 15, 2011- accepted as written by consensus

Mar 1, 2011 – tabled

Mar 15, 2011- accepted as corrected by consensus

(correct the name-Amy Donnelly Roche)

New Business:

Chairperson: School has been identified as PLA (Persistently Lowest-Achieving) school – more discussion to follow.

- Uniform Chart of Accounts (UCOA)-Chair asked Corsino Delgado to explain.

Corsino Delgado: Noted that he felt people from RIDE could explain better; there is a need to use these codes to keep everyone on same page and makes it easier to compare data; because the numbers can be misleading—don't read too much into data; every transaction is captured and reported; cost per student numbers looks high for us because of our enrollment-as you can see on the report 4.9 million went to instruction and support. Chair asked how he could answer to constituents about our high numbers/costs. Corsino noted that the numbers are skewed, can't make a true comparison because of low enrollment. Board member asked to be provided with a monthly summary by subject code or object code so that the Board can stay on top of expenses. Corsino answered that he could report quarterly.

Director noted that the Board needs a finance committee to meet with Mr. Delgado on costs/expenses; to better understand our position and support him. Mr. Delgado noted that our costs are always high, our interpreting services are a lot higher; he noted that he understands the concerns but did not want the Board to draw conclusions from numbers. There was a discussion regarding our costs and justifications; we are not a typical K-12 school. Chair asked to see data to help make PLA model decision.

Andrea Castenada (RIDE): We ran UCOA report before the meeting which shows pattern of expenditures; we will work w/Corsino to get a complete copy. The report is 80

pages-after Corsino has a chance to really inspect it, perhaps he will be able to answer more questions.

- **PLA – Persistently Lowest Achieving** – Chair asked Jennifer Smith, Chief Transformation Officer, from RIDE to give the definition and explain. Ms Smith explained that RISD had failed to achieve AYP – No Child Left Behind – numbers not acceptable; we will have more than average amount of support. Board needs to look at the 4 models for turnarounds; RIDE will help with construction of school reform plan after feedback (stake holders meetings held) and decisions are made. Noted that Board has 120 days to construct reform model – focus on a few objectives to help students achieve academic proficiency.
- **Process/Timeline** – Much discussion ensued re: the 30 day timeline in making a decision on the model; stake holder meetings; how to gather the data, get best feedback. The expectation is that this turnaround must be completed in three years. Board member voiced concern about communication problems with the children who are deaf and hard of hearing – we have to teach them how to communicate first before we can begin to teach them; developmental delays have huge impact on learning. Another Board member noted that she was not surprised that this school is failing because expectations are low for deaf and other special education schools; no one paid attention for many years, re: teacher certification, student proficiency; gave kudos to Commissioner Gist for tackling this huge problem. Member asked Ms. Smith if we could expect some dollars in support once we choose transformation model. Ms. Smith noted that we would have to apply to the School Improvement Grant fund; it's a competitive grant; they look for strength of the reform plan.

Ms. Smith went into some detail about the four models that the board can choose: 1) Closure; 2) Restart; 3) Turnaround; and 4) Transformation. She gave a definition of each and noted that numbers 3 and 4 will need a new governance structure; strategies to evaluate staff; a needs analysis; commitment from teachers; need flexibility to do things differently; important to get everyone's perspective from stake holder meetings. Member noted that, as a parent of a deaf child, she had to go out of the state to have a better option for her child; teacher readiness is key element to school improvement. Another member voiced concerns about NECAP being sole indicator of AYP; feel key element to school improvement is

language and cultural development and planning for that; not fair to solely judge AYP on NECAP alone for kids who are deaf and hard of hearing.

Break: 7:40 p.m.

- **Administrative Staffing – DIRECTOR, ASST. DIRECTOR:**
Chair noted that it was not appropriate at this time to continue the discussion of Director and Assistant Director until a model is chosen. Members voiced concern that we would be without a leader; we have operational and instructional concerns; questioned whether the Director position is really like principal in a public school where Superintendent takes care of the finances and other aspects of operation. Members felt that school needs an educational leader, someone to work with finances and the state- want to go forward with search; time is a factor; need to change Director's job description; request a consultant for short-term.
- **Stakeholder meeting – schedule within 30 days or less –** Chair asked for dates....after much discussion, it was decided that Tuesday, 4/26 and Saturday 4/30 would be the two stakeholder forums; also, a link on the school website would be established for input from stake holders. At the next regular meeting on May 3rd, input discussed and decisions made.

Public Comment: President of Teacher's Union read from a letter stating that the teachers are prepared to work with RIDE and BOT to improve quality of education at RISD. Noted that NECAP is unfair to our students; need to develop matrix to demonstrate student growth.

Transition Coordinator: noted that the program is based on the needs of students; curriculum is not meeting the needs of our population, and transition needs to be part of Strategic Plan.

Acting Assistant Director of Operations and Finance spoke re: the Board's decision to place a hold on appointing him (or anyone else) in the position permanently. He realizes that after transformation his position could be non-existent, but feels it is wise to have that position permanently filled until such time any new plan is implemented....school still needs someone to run the day to day operations in the meantime. Members agreed that school needs educational leaders, are not going to give up on entire school.

Old Business

RISD Strategic Plan

- Finalize 4th RISD Function – slight modifications made
- Motions were made and members accepted by consensus the Strategic Plan re: Mission & Functions statements.
- Member noted that it is not really a Strategic Plan, but a Goal/Mission Statement.

Agenda Items and Next Meeting Date:

II. Adjournment

- a. Meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.